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Realization of the Millennium Development Goals and internationally agreed development goals for persons with disabilities: a disability-inclusive development agenda towards 2015 and beyond

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report, submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 65/186, provides an overview of progress made since the previous report in 2011 (A/66/121) on the implementation of policies and programmes related to persons with disabilities within the framework of the Millennium Development Goals. During the reporting period, the Assembly decided to hold a high-level meeting on disability and development in 2013, to take concerted action towards a disability-inclusive post-2015 development framework. The report also provides recommendations on priority areas for inclusion in the outcome of the high-level meeting, as well as in ongoing efforts to mainstream disability in the development agenda towards 2015 and beyond.

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I. Introduction

1. In its resolution 65/186, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to submit to it, during its sixty-seventh session, information on progress made towards the implementation of programmes and policies related to persons with disabilities within the framework of the Millennium Development Goals.

2. During the reporting period, the General Assembly decided to hold a high-level meeting on disability and development in 2013, to take decisive action towards a disability-inclusive post-2015 development framework. The present report provides recommendations on priority areas for inclusion in the outcome of the high-level meeting, as well as in the ongoing efforts for mainstreaming disability in a post-2015 development framework.

II. Context of the high-level meeting on disability and development

3. The commitment of the international community to the advancement of the rights of persons with disabilities and their inclusion in society and development is deeply rooted in the goals of the United Nations: realization of the call of the Charter of the United Nations for fundamental human rights, the dignity and worth of the human person, and the promotion of better standards of life in larger freedom. From its earliest years and with an approach that has evolved over decades, the United Nations has addressed the status of persons with disabilities. Initially, the focus was on addressing disability from the perspectives of social and medical welfare, until the 1970s, when the international community began to focus on integrating the rights of persons with disabilities into all facets of development.

4. In 1982, the General Assembly, with a view to advancing the goal of inclusive society and development, adopted the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons (resolution 38/28). The World Programme challenged the view that it was persons with disabilities who should adapt to existing societal standards, and instead placed the burden on society itself to remove barriers to their full participation. The international framework on disability was further strengthened through the adoption by the Assembly in 1993 of the Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities (resolution 48/96), which strengthened the human rights perspective on disability issues and established "equalization of opportunities" as a central goal of international efforts. In 2001, the international community initiated the process for the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities,[1] which was adopted unanimously by the Assembly in 2006.[2] The Convention was, from the very beginning of the process, envisaged as both a human rights and a development instrument.[3]

5. The Convention constitutes a commitment of the international community to inclusion of the disability perspective and persons with disabilities in all aspects of society and development. However, that commitment has yet to be translated into

[1] Available from http://www.un.org/disabilities/convention/conventionfull.shtml.

[2] As at 18 July 2012, there are 117 ratifications and 49 signatories to the Convention and 65 ratifications and 38 signatories to the Optional Protocol.

[3] Statement by Mexican President Vicente Fox to the General Assembly at its fifty-sixth session.

inclusion of disability in internationally agreed development goals.[4] Although there are more than 1 billion disabled persons, or 15 per cent of the world's population, the vast majority of whom live in developing countries, disability is not included in the Millennium Development Goals nor in their operationalizing targets and indicators. As a result, disability has largely been invisible in their implementation, rarely included in national policies or programmes related to the Millennium Development Goals, or in monitoring and evaluation efforts.

6. In the years since the United Nations Millennium Declaration (see resolution 55/2), years which saw the drafting and adoption of the Convention, the need to include persons with disabilities in the international development agenda has gained increased international recognition. The international community has therefore sought to address the omission of disability from the Millennium Development Goals in a number of ways.[5] During its first five-year review of progress in implementing the United Nations Millennium Declaration, the General Assembly, in its resolution 60/1, recognized the need for persons with disabilities to be guaranteed full enjoyment of their rights without discrimination. In 2010, at its second five-year review of progress in implementing the United Nations Millennium Declaration, the Assembly adopted resolution 65/1, in which it included disability in the context of promoting full and productive employment and decent work for all; providing more equitable access to economic opportunities and social services; and making special efforts to meet the nutritional needs of those living in vulnerable situations.

7. In recent years, the General Assembly has also emphasized, in a series of resolutions,[6] that it is impossible to genuinely achieve internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals, without the inclusion and integration of the rights, well-being and perspective of persons with disabilities in development efforts at the national, regional and international levels.[7]

8. Since the Millennium Summit, the inclusion of disability in various aspects of development has also been discussed at a number of international conferences on economic and social development, such as the Second World Assembly on Ageing, held in Madrid from 8 to 12 April 2002, and the World Summit on Sustainable Development, held in Johannesburg, South Africa, from 26 August to 4 September 2002, as well as on the information society, with the convening of the World Summit on the Information Society in Geneva from 10 to 12 December 2003 and in Tunis from 16 to 18 November 2005. Notably, the interlinkages between disability

[4] In instances where disability has been addressed in the outcome documents of previous United Nations global development conferences, the manner in which it is treated has varied. In some cases, persons with disabilities have been treated solely as members of "vulnerable groups". In other cases, persons with disabilities have been recognized as both agents and beneficiaries of development processes. The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, adopted at the Fourth World Conference on Women, and the Istanbul Declaration on Human Settlements and Habitat Agenda, adopted at the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements, are examples of outcome documents that take the latter approach.

[5] For example, in 2009, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat, in collaboration with the World Health Organization, organized an expert group meeting on mainstreaming disability in the policies, processes and mechanisms of the Millennium Development Goals. The meeting sought to make knowledge and experiences concerning the implementation processes of the Goals, including monitoring and evaluation, more accessible to all stakeholders.

[6] General Assembly resolutions 64/131, 65/186 and 66/124.

[7] General Assembly resolutions 63/150, 64/131 and 65/186.

and sustainable development were addressed at the 2012 United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20). The outcome document of the Conference, adopted as resolution 66/288 and entitled "The future we want", includes a number of specific references, including in paragraphs 43, 135, 229 and 58, to disability, highlighting, inter alia, the fact that sustainable development requires the meaningful involvement and active participation of persons with disabilities; the need for development policies that support inclusive housing and social services, as well as a safe and healthy living environment for all, particularly persons with disabilities; and ensuring equal access to education for persons with disabilities and enhancing the welfare of persons with disabilities. Paragraph 9 of the document also addresses the responsibilities of States to respect, protect and promote human rights and fundamental freedom for all.

9. With the 2015 deadline for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals drawing near, the international community has begun to address the issue of a future framework. As discussions regarding the post-2015 agenda gain momentum, the international community has before it a critical opportunity to ensure the inclusion of disability in the emerging global development agenda. To that end, the General Assembly, in 2011, decided to convene a high-level meeting, at the level of Heads of States and Governments, on 23 September 2013, to consider the overarching theme "The way forward: a disability inclusive development agenda towards 2015 and beyond" (see resolution 66/124).

10. The high-level meeting would provide a historic opportunity to bring global attention to the situation of persons with disabilities, and to decide on the way forward to achieve the goal of the United Nations in that regard: inclusive development and a society in which persons with disabilities are both agents and beneficiaries. The meeting is expected to result in a concise, action-oriented outcome document (see resolution 66/124), which would enable the international community to advance a disability-inclusive development agenda, in alignment with existing international commitments, such as the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the World Programme of Action concerning Persons with Disabilities, the Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities and other relevant human rights and development instruments.

III. Realizing the Millennium Development Goals for persons with disabilities: progress and initiatives

11. In preparation for the present report, Member States were requested to provide information concerning: (a) progress made since 2010 in implementing programmes and policies relating to persons with disabilities to realize the Millennium Development Goals; (b) obstacles encountered and challenges faced in relation to implementing policies and programmes for the realization of the Millennium Development Goals for persons with disabilities; and (c) views on the most important elements to be included in ongoing work towards a disability-inclusive post-2015 development agenda. The Secretariat received 17 submissions from Member States and other areas,[8] 18 from the Secretariat and bodies and

[8] Submissions were received from the following Member States: Brazil, Burkina Faso, Canada, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Mexico, Mozambique, Paraguay, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Spain, Switzerland, Togo and Uruguay. A submission was also received from the Cook Islands, which is a non-Member State of the United Nations, although it is a member State of a number of United Nations specialized agencies.

organizations of the United Nations system[9] and 4 from civil society organizations.[10] The present section may also be read in conjunction with the information contained in the previous report of the Secretary-General on realization of the Millennium Development Goals and other internationally agreed development goals for persons with disabilities (A/66/128), for which submissions were received from 41 countries during the reporting period.

A. Member States

1. Legislative measures, action plans and programmes

12. Many States reported on progress in legislative and policy development concerning the rights of persons with disabilities, including the enactment or amendment of national legislation and the adoption and implementation of national plans relevant to the Millennium Development Goals and other internationally agreed development goals.

13. Several States, including Japan, Mexico and Uruguay, reported that they had adopted new legislation concerning the advancement of the rights of persons with disabilities. Canada emphasized its equality and non-discrimination protection for persons with disabilities. Other States drew attention to their continuing efforts to develop policy measures for implementing the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. For example, Latvia reported that it was drafting strategic policy guidelines on "Basic principles of implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities for 2013-2019". Indonesia reported that it was currently implementing its national plan of action on persons with disabilities for 2004-2013.

14. A number of States, including Mexico, Mozambique, Qatar, Spain and Uruguay, indicated that they had included disability in their national development strategies or had developed specific plans to advance the inclusion of persons with disabilities, including through accessibility measures. Italy and Switzerland reported on undertaking initiatives to include disability in international cooperation and development assistance programmes, including through the funding of projects intended to support the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. Qatar also reported on its endeavours to coordinate and monitor the efforts of Government ministries with regard to programmes and plans for persons with disabilities.

[9] Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, United Nations Mine Action Service, Economic Commission for Africa, Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, United Nations Partnership to Promote the Rights of Persons with Disabilities/United Nations Development Programme, United Nations Population Fund, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, United Nations Children's Fund, Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, International Civil Aviation Organization, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, World Health Organization, World Bank and World Tourism Organization.

[10] Disabled People's International, International Disability Alliance, International Disability and Development Consortium, and Leonard Cheshire Disability.

2. Poverty eradication

15. Several States provided concrete examples of initiatives to reduce poverty experienced by persons with disabilities. Paraguay indicated that it was providing direct support for health care, education and social inclusion of families in poverty, with special support for families with members with disabilities. The Republic of Korea reported on programmes aimed at providing support and social security for persons with disabilities in economic hardship. Togo highlighted the participation of organizations of persons with disabilities in the formulation of strategic approaches to poverty reduction.

16. Recognizing that access to employment was essential to the eradication of poverty, several States reported on efforts to support and advance employment of persons with disabilities. For example, Paraguay offered vocational training to increase employment opportunities for persons with disabilities. Other States, including Burkina Faso, had introduced employment quotas for persons with disabilities.

3. Access to education

17. Many States reported on efforts to advance inclusive educational programmes to further the education of children with disabilities. The Cook Islands reported that it had endorsed a national inclusive education policy and had strengthened the capacity of its schools to deliver inclusive education through the employment of an inclusive education adviser, teacher aides and training for teachers. Brazil provided examples of its efforts to ensure accessibility of educational institutions for children with disabilities, including through provision of accessible school transportation services and architectural adjustments to schools.

4. Gender equality

18. Several States provided information on their ongoing efforts to advance the status of women with disabilities. The Cook Islands specifically addressed the issues faced by women and girls with disabilities in its National Gender Policy 2011. The Republic of Korea reported that it had implemented measures designed specifically for women with disabilities, and included them in integrated programmes related to women or disability, such as the Five-year Policy Development Plan for Persons with Disabilities and its Basic Plan for Women's Policies.

5. Health and rehabilitation

19. Several States reported on their efforts to promote the sexual and reproductive health of persons with disabilities. Burkina Faso indicated that it was carrying out training on disability for health-care practitioners in the field of reproductive health and in awareness-raising activities, as well as in providing support to persons with disabilities with HIV and AIDS. Brazil also reported on an expansion of its efforts to provide health care to persons with disabilities.

B. United Nations system

20. During the reporting period, the United Nations system intensified its efforts to advance the rights of persons with disabilities and mainstream disability in the development agenda, with a focus on the promotion of accessibility, capacity development, and the strengthening of disability data and statistics.

1. Mainstreaming disability in development policies and practices

21. As the United Nations focal point on disability, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs has continued to support United Nations intergovernmental processes and to collaborate with all stakeholders, including Governments, United Nations system entities, and civil society organizations — especially organizations of persons with disabilities — in advancing the mainstreaming of disability in development. The Department has regularly brought together such stakeholders for consultative meetings and discussions in conjunction with sessions of the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council, the Commission for Social Development and the Commission on the Status of Women, among others, and on the occasion of the 2011 International Day of Persons with Disabilities. Priority issues addressed by the Department during the reporting period have included accessibility; data and statistics; the situation of particular groups with disabilities, including women, children and indigenous persons; mental health; emergency and disaster response; and international development cooperation.

22. The Department of Economic and Social Affairs has continued to work closely with the Special Rapporteur on disability of the Commission for Social Development in promoting the equalization of opportunities for persons with disabilities through action towards the common goals and objectives of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the Standard Rules on Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities and the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons. The Special Rapporteur presented his annual report to the Commission during its fiftieth session, highlighting his efforts with regard to the mainstreaming of disability in development processes, with a focus on Africa, and priority issues, such as mental health and women with disabilities.

23. The Inter-Agency Support Group on the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, co-chaired by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), has developed a roll-out strategy for the United Nations Development Group guidance note on including the rights of persons with disabilities in United Nations programming at the country level. In accordance with the strategy, the Inter-Agency Support Group will continue to develop training tools and other relevant materials and to support use of the guidance note as a critical tool for mainstreaming disability in the work of United Nations country teams. The Department of Economic and Social Affairs has also issued a "Toolkit on disability rights, gender and development" to complement the United Nations Development Group's guidance note on disability.

24. Entities of the United Nations system have also reported on a wide range of mainstreaming activities. The Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) reported that it was preparing for a high-level meeting to review

implementation of the Asian and Pacific Decade of Disabled Persons, 2003-2012. The expected outcome document of the meeting is to include 10 goals — similar to the Millennium Development Goals — linked to targets and indicators, to guide a new decade on disability, 2013-2022. Regional and country offices of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) have carried out targeted mainstream programmes related to the Millennium Development Goals that have included children with disabilities. The Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS has prepared a draft strategy for integrating disability into country-level HIV programmes. In 2010, the World Health Organization (WHO) launched the community-based rehabilitation guidelines for disability and development workers to enable communities to empower children and adults with disabilities and ensure their inclusion in community development.

2. Accessibility

25. The interdepartmental task force on accessibility, established jointly by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) in October 2010, has continued to promote accessibility of the built environment — facilities, human resources and services, including documentation and interpretation services — at the United Nations Secretariat. During the reporting period, the task force continued its work to develop a Secretariat-wide policy for accessibility, to enable full and effective participation of persons with disabilities in all aspects of the work of the United Nations. In April 2012, the Human Rights Council endorsed the report of the task force on secretariat services of the United Nations Office at Geneva on enhancing the accessibility of the Council and its mechanisms.

26. In April 2012, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and the United Nations information centre in Tokyo, in close collaboration with the Nippon Foundation of Japan, organized a three-day expert group meeting in Tokyo to discuss ways to further a disability-inclusive society and development through accessible information and communications technology, including in the context of natural disaster and emergency prevention and response.[11]

27. A number of United Nations entities, including the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the World Intellectual Property Organization, reported on measures to improve accessibility in terms of physical facilities and human resources. Others, including the International Civil Aviation Organization, the United Nations Population Fund, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, and the World Tourism Organization, have worked to advance accessibility by providing — or working to develop — accessibility guidelines, by preparing information materials in accessible formats, and promoting accessible information and communications technologies.

3. Capacity development: forming new partnerships among United Nations entities

28. The Department of Economic and Social Affairs, OHCHR, the United Nations Development Programme and UNICEF have continued to collaborate on the establishment of a trust fund for the United Nations Partnership to Promote the

[11] Further information is available from http://www.un.org/disabilities/default.asp?navid=46&pid=1596.

Rights of Persons with Disabilities to mainstream disability in all aspects of development through capacity-building of national stakeholders. The Partnership initiated its first call for proposals in May 2012.

29. Entities of the United Nations system, including the United Nations Mine Action Service, reported on their support through the training of Government representatives and civil society on disability awareness, the rights of persons with disabilities and ways of mainstreaming disability in local policies and programmes. Other United Nations entities, including the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and UNICEF, and organizations such as the World Bank, reported on the development and provision of disability-awareness training for staff members.

4. Disability data and statistics, monitoring and evaluation

30. The United Nations system continues to assist Member States to take measures to strengthen the collection, compilation and analysis of national disability data and statistics, which can support evidence-based policymaking. The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) initiated a project to build national capacity to collect disability data and statistics. In 2011, the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) carried out surveys on the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the results of which will be published in the 2012 edition of the ECLAC flagship publication, *Social Panorama of Latin America*.

31. Following their recommendations, issued in the *World Report on Disability*,[12] on the importance of internationally comparable and reliable disability data, WHO and the World Bank initiated a project to develop standardized survey questions on different aspects of disability, including environmental factors. This planned model disability survey will use a common definition and concepts of disability based on the International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health. The survey will build on relevant technical work and experience acquired to date, and will provide the data that social, health and other sectors would require for effective policy development and monitoring and evaluation on disability inclusion. Data gathered through the survey would also correspond to monitoring requirements of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, as well as other human rights and development instruments.

C. Civil society organizations

32. Civil society organizations, including of persons with disabilities, reported on a broad range of strategies and activities at all levels for advancing the inclusion of persons with disabilities in development. Approaches included advocacy, raising awareness, capacity-building and the development of resource materials for implementation of the Convention and the Millennium Development Goals for persons with disabilities.[13] Leaders of major international disability organizations met in June 2012 at the Beijing Forum on Disability to deliberate on the

[12] World Health Organization and World Bank, *World Report on Disability* (Geneva, 2011).

[13] These include online resources relevant to the high-level meeting on disability and development, which are available from http://www.disabilitydatabase.org, www.includeeverybody.org and www.cbm.org/mdg-resource-kit.

implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the Millennium Development Goals, and issued a series of recommendations. The Forum urged Governments and the United Nations to take actions to include disability in the emerging post-2015 development framework.[14]

D. Challenges to the mainstreaming of disability in development

33. Member States and the United Nations system shared largely consistent views on the challenges to their efforts to mainstream disability in the development agenda and processes.

34. A primary challenge related to establishing domestic legislative and policy frameworks, including where States had yet to ratify the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, or where States parties to the Convention had not yet harmonized laws and policies with the Convention. In some cases, laws had been enacted to advance the status of persons with disabilities, but supportive regulatory frameworks and resources for implementation were absent or severely lacking. Frequently, indicators on disability were not in place, hindering assessment of the extent to which policies and programmes had benefited persons with disabilities. In other cases, there was still a need to establish an institution or mechanism with a broad enough mandate for mainstreaming disability in development policies and programming. The lack of adequate and credible data and statistics has been clearly seen to contribute to the exclusion of disability from development efforts.

35. Member States and United Nations entities further highlighted the need for the capacity development of all stakeholders, including Governments, the United Nations system, disabled persons organizations and other civil society organizations, to overcome the gaps frequently encountered in knowledge and understanding about the situation of persons with disabilities in society and development. The need for concrete measures to address discrimination and stigmatization faced by persons with disabilities was also noted. In that regard, it was underlined that specific attention should be devoted to the advancement of groups of persons with disabilities facing additional levels of marginalization, including those with mental, intellectual or psychosocial disabilities, and multiple forms of disabilities.

36. Much emphasis was placed on the need for additional resources and for a more effective distribution of funds currently allocated to supporting the mainstreaming of disability in development.

E. Priority issues for achieving a disability-inclusive post-2015 development framework

37. Governments, the United Nations system, organizations of persons with disabilities and other civil society organizations recommended a number of key issues for inclusion in a post-2015 development framework.

[14] Beijing Declaration on Disability-inclusive Development, adopted by the Beijing Forum on Disability (6-8 June 2012). The Forum, hosted by China Disabled Persons' Federation, with the support of the Government of China, was attended by members of the highest office of the host Government, as well as leaders of major international disability organizations, and from the Asia and Pacific region.

38. Accessibility to the physical environment, to transportation, information and communications was identified as essential to the achievement of development goals inclusive of persons with disability. The need for persons with disabilities to participate in relevant decision-making processes was also stressed, as was the need for capacity-building on disability issues at all levels and empowerment of civil society organizations. Several civil society organizations also highlighted the need for an enhanced human rights-based approach to development that addressed both the causes and effects of poverty and inequality.

39. Other priorities identified for a disability-inclusive post-2015 development framework included increased collection of reliable and comparable data on disability; the promotion of early and inclusive education for children with disabilities; inclusion of disability perspectives in disaster preparedness and management; enhanced work and employment prospects and collaboration with the private sector on matters of employment for persons with disabilities; and greater attention to situations in which persons with disabilities faced multiple and aggravated forms of discrimination.

IV. Building a stronger foundation to support disability-inclusive development

40. Since their introduction in the road map for the implementation of the Millennium Declaration, the Millennium Development Goals have been at the forefront of the global development agenda. The invisibility of disability in the Millennium Development Goals has therefore represented a tremendous missed opportunity, albeit one that may be avoided in terms of the emerging post-2015 development framework.

41. In the wake of the multiple global crises that emerged towards the end of the past decade, there is increased recognition that economic growth cannot be sustainable if it is achieved at the expense of social progress and environmental protection. With efforts under way to redefine the global development landscape over the course of the next few years, the international community has extraordinary opportunities to accomplish a truly transformative development agenda that includes a "disability lens", and is both equitable and socially inclusive of persons with disabilities. To achieve this, it will be essential that persons with disabilities participate in all relevant processes to reinforce the disability perspective in the development discourse.[15]

42. The General Assembly has repeatedly called for action to ensure the inclusion and mainstreaming of disability in internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals, and has set out its priorities for doing

[15] In terms of the process to establish a post-2015 development framework, for example, a number of consultative processes are under way, including consultations led by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, as well as national level consultations being held in 50 countries coordinated by the United Nations Development Group to inform the post-2015 framework. In addition, there are a number of outreach exercises and informal network groups such as the Beyond 2015 Campaign, which includes over 300 non-governmental organizations, academic institutions and social movements. It is vital that persons with disabilities and their representative organizations be fully engaged throughout the process to reinforce the disability perspective in the development discourse.

so.[16] These include: (a) strengthening and applying the international normative framework on disability; (b) promoting accessibility; (c) promoting capacity development; and (d) strengthening disability data and statistics, analysis, monitoring and evaluation. Action in these priority areas, further detailed below, is essential for the realization of disability-inclusive development, as well as the overarching objective of sustainable, equitable and inclusive development.

A. Strengthening and applying the international normative framework on disability

43. The international normative framework on disability consists of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons, and the Standard Rules on Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities, as well as other human rights and development instruments. Moving forward, the international community has the opportunity to further strengthen the framework by also ensuring explicit inclusion of disability as a cross-cutting issue in the post-2015 development agenda.

44. At the same time, the international community must prioritize efforts to implement the existing framework, and to strengthen it by recognizing the cross-sectionalities between the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and other human rights instruments, including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Convention on the Rights of the Child. For example, to advance the rights of women and girls with disabilities in all aspects of society and development, their perspectives must be included in all aspects of work to implement the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. Similarly, all work on disability should incorporate a gender perspective. The many decades of existing experience in promoting the latter Convention and the Convention on the Rights of the Child should be fully utilized for the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and its monitoring and evaluation by the rapidly evolving networks of stakeholders in the field of disability.

45. At the national level, although progress has been made in recent years in the promotion of disability-inclusive development, there remains a persistent gap between policy and practice. The challenge is to translate international commitments into actual changes on the ground by improving legislative, regulatory and policy frameworks and mechanisms and their implementation.

46. It is important to note that the adoption of a specific law or policy on disability would rarely be sufficient to harmonize domestic legal and regulatory systems with the international normative framework on disability. To effectively mainstream disability in policies and programmes to promote inclusive society and development, States would need to ensure that persons with disabilities have access, on an equal basis with the general population, to mainstream services, including in relation to education, health, social protection, work and employment, transport and communication. This requires that gaps in laws and policies and their implementation that create barriers to participation for persons with disabilities be identified and addressed. For example, many countries have laws that guarantee

[16] General Assembly resolutions 63/150, 64/131, 65/186 and 66/124.

education for all. Yet, children with disabilities, in particular those with intellectual disabilities, are more likely to remain excluded from education than other children.

47. Implementation of the international normative framework on disability also requires monitoring and evaluation. The Convention, for example, calls upon States parties to designate focal points for implementation within Governments; to consider establishing a coordination mechanism; and to establish an independent framework to promote and monitor implementation, with the participation of civil society, in particular persons with disabilities and their representative organizations. To promote the mainstreaming of disability in development, reporting on the implementation of the three disability-specific instruments may also be linked and coordinated with reporting efforts relating to other international human rights conventions and to the implementation of internationally agreed development goals.

B. Promoting accessibility for inclusive and sustainable development

48. Accessibility allows for the creation of enabling environments necessary for the full participation of persons with disabilities, on an equal basis with others, in all aspects of life in society and development. Achieving accessibility has therefore been a key goal of the international framework on disability. It is also an essential component for the achievement of sustainable and equitable development.

49. According to the *World Report on Disability*, persons with disabilities comprise 15 per cent of all populations and societies. As a result of global trends in population ageing and a global increase in chronic health conditions, as well as the disabling impact of environmental degradation, the incidence of impairment and disability among the general population is expected to increase. The numbers of those impacted by disability are even higher when family members and caregivers of persons with disabilities are included. The progressive removal of barriers to the participation of those impacted by disability therefore becomes urgent in order to meet the rising demand for accessible environments.

50. As noted in section II above, the international community has sought to advance accessibility in a number of ways. Recently, the United Nations expert group meeting held in Tokyo from 19 to 21 April 2012, on the theme "Building inclusive societies and development through promotion of accessible information and communication technologies: emerging issues and trends", explored innovative options and ways for information and communications technology to play a central role in creating equal opportunities for all to participate in society and development. In 2010, the United Nations expert group meeting on the theme "Accessibility: innovative and cost-effective approaches inclusive accessible development", noted that progress had been made in increasing accessibility of the built environment, transportation, and information and communications technology.

51. In spite of existing efforts, the need to advance accessibility remains urgent in many areas. For example, accessibility can be a lifeline for persons with disabilities in cases of emergency and natural disasters. The issue of accessible emergency and

disaster relief and reconstruction has gained increased attention in recent years[17] since it has become increasingly apparent that, while no one is immune from natural or man-made disasters, the impact of such disasters on persons with disabilities can be particularly and disproportionately severe. For example, according to the expert group meeting held in Tokyo in April 2012, it is estimated that the death rate of persons with disabilities was at least twice as high as that among the general population affected in the 2011 Tohoku earthquake and tsunami experienced by Japan.

52. Natural disaster and emergency response and reduction strategies should therefore take into account the varying requirements of persons with disabilities and ensure that minimum accessibility standards are met and established from the very beginning. Likewise, specific attention should be given to ensuring that persons with disabilities among refugees and displaced populations have full access to camp infrastructure and facilities, services, shelter and information on an equal basis with others.[18] The responsibility for strengthening the inclusion of disability-sensitive and inclusive content in the formulation of policies, programming and strategies across all domains, including human rights, development and peace and security falls to the United Nations and the whole international community.

53. In seeking to advance accessibility on all fronts, Governments may wish to consider how accessibility can be promoted through the development and implementation of relevant public policies. For example, there are promising practices in public procurement measures taken by a number of countries, particularly in Europe and North America,[19] that have served to regulate market behaviour and have brought about economic and social development that is more accessible to and inclusive of persons with disabilities.

C. Addressing gaps in capacity-building

54. In order to advance disability-inclusive development, stakeholders at all levels, including Governments, the United Nations system and other international organizations and civil society organizations, must have the appropriate knowledge, experience and skills to translate international commitments into outcomes on the ground. At present, however, stakeholders at all levels frequently lack the capacity to adequately include disability in the implementation of international and national development policies, programmes and monitoring and evaluation.

55. Capacity-building efforts may include development of educational and guidance programmes and materials, aimed at all stakeholders, to promote

[17] For example, the United Nations expert group meeting held in Tokyo in April 2012 drew attention to the situation of persons with disabilities in the event of humanitarian crises and natural disaster. At the fifth International Shafallah Forum, on the theme "Crisis, conflict and disability: ensuring equality", the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and other United Nations entities participated and deliberated on how humanitarian responses, recovery and rebuilding efforts could ensure the protection and inclusion of refugees and displaced people with disabilities before, during and after crisis and disasters. (See http://www.shafallahforum.org/shafallah-forum/.)

[18] Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children, *Disability Among Refugees and Conflict-Affected Populations* (June 2008).

[19] See http://www.un.org/disabilities/documents/egm2012/final-report.pdf.

knowledge and skills-building at all levels.[20] International development cooperation can play an important role in facilitating capacity-building through the provision of technical assistance for training and educational programmes.

56. As part of capacity-building efforts, Governments should assess existing programmes and services for persons with disabilities to better understand gaps in specific expertise and skills. For instance, in the fields of rehabilitation and inclusive education, many countries still experience skills shortages and qualified professionals are urgently needed. Bearing in mind resource limitations, a cost-effective strategy could include prioritizations within the national development plan to identify sectors for allocation of resources that would most contribute to the equalization of opportunities for persons with disabilities, while accelerating progress towards achievement of internationally agreed development goals.

57. At both the policy and operational levels, priority should be given to the capacity-building of policymakers, development practitioners, service providers, researchers, and other stakeholders. It is critical that they be equipped with the knowledge and skills to formulate and implement strategic plans to promote disability inclusion, especially in the key areas of education, health, social protection, employment and labour, to deliver a more coordinated and cohesive response to disability and the situation of persons with disability at the national and local levels.

58. Capacity development efforts should also include initiatives aimed at empowering persons with disabilities and their organizations, as well as other civil society organizations. In particular, capacity-building can support persons with disabilities and their representative organizations to take part in the decision-making that would affect their lives and, in turn, contribute to the efforts towards an inclusive society.

59. In addition to the capacity-building of key stakeholders, there is also a need to improve understanding and awareness of disability in the general population, including through public-awareness campaigns and other forms of educational processes. Improving the understanding and awareness concerning disability by the larger society can contribute to the creation of a disability-inclusive society.

D. Assessing the situation of persons with disabilities: inclusive monitoring and evaluation frameworks

60. At the global level, the lack of internationally comparable data and statistics on disability has been a major obstacle in monitoring the well-being of persons with disabilities and ensuring that they are included in the realization of the Millennium Development Goals and other internationally agreed development goals. At the national level, reliable and timely data are a vital component of all stages of development programme cycles: data supports the design of evidence-based policies, which in turn determine the development projects to be implemented. Such projects are then monitored and evaluated, and the resulting information, which should indicate whether there have been demonstrable improvements for persons

[20] The Department of Economic and Social Affairs, in collaboration with the World Bank, is developing a series of modules on disability and development based on the World Bank's inaugural disability and development core course held in Washington, D.C., from 7 to 11 May 2012.

with disabilities, may be used to evaluate the adequacy of existing policies, and to inform future policy direction.

61. The need for adequate data and statistics concerning the situation of persons with disabilities has been well recognized by the international community, and the General Assembly has repeatedly called for improvements in that area.[21] Most recently, the ministerial declaration of the high-level segment of the 2012 Economic and Social Council annual ministerial review called for the collection of data, including data disaggregated by disability, as a means to promote the creation of decent work, a key theme of the session (E/HLS/2012/1).

62. In spite of such recognition and existing international commitments, the collection of adequate data and statistics concerning disability is challenged by the lack of internationally agreed methods and tools for data collection, which has resulted in the use of different definitions, questionnaires and methodologies. Consequently, States have generated data statistics of a varying nature and quality, which are often not internationally comparable. Moreover, on the one hand, because disability data and statistics are not integrated into global level monitoring and evaluation processes, such as those under way for the Millennium Development Goals, there is no specific requirement from such processes for the collection, harmonization or compilation of disability data and statistics, or for corresponding analysis, monitoring and evaluation.

63. On the other hand, an increasing number of States have been gathering data on disability during the past decade. For example, the initial review of data from the 2005-2014 census round indicates that, of the 119 countries for which data is now available, 82 countries (or 70 per cent) collected information on disability. This is a significant increase from 53 per cent in the previous census round (1995-2004). In order for this improvement to lead to fruition in the form of internationally comparable disability data and statistics, periodic reports could be submitted to appropriate intergovernmental reporting mechanisms within the United Nations, so that much needed information concerning the situation of persons with disabilities in different aspects of development can be collected and analysed.

64. Governments are strongly encouraged to approach preparations for the next census round (2015-2024) with a view, at the very minimum, to including the short set of six questions recommended by the Washington Group on Disability Statistics. It is further recommended that questions on disability be included in existing national surveys, such as household, health and labour force surveys, and that data from administrative registers be utilized to develop a comprehensive picture and understanding of the situation of persons with disabilities. Additional information on disability, such as health conditions associated with disability, use of and need for services and environmental factors can be gathered through the design and carrying out of dedicated disability surveys. Countries that wish to undertake such dedicated surveys are encouraged to consult with the United Nations system organizations, including the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, the International Labour Organization, UNICEF, WHO and the World Bank.

65. In pursuit of the above-mentioned efforts, Member States are strongly encouraged to use: (a) the *Principles and Recommendations for Population and*

[21] See, for example, General Assembly resolutions 63/150, para. 5; 64/131, para. 10; and 65/186, para. 13.

Housing Censuses, Revision 2; (b) the *Guidelines and Principles for the Development of Disability Statistics*; (c) the work and methods on disability statistics as approved by the Statistical Commission; and (d) other recently revised tools, such as the WHO disability assessment schedule 2.0, which is based on a conceptual framework that directly corresponds with the "activity and participation dimensions" of the International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health.

66. Concerted efforts should be made by relevant institutions and mechanisms responsible for monitoring compliance and evaluation of disability indicators to work together to generate information and analysis on disability, especially in the context of monitoring and evaluation processes of a post-2015 development framework.

67. Consideration should be given to initiating biannual and quinquennial global reports on disability and development, starting from 2015, by the United Nations system through an official United Nations intergovernmental mechanism. The report could include an analysis of the available disability data and statistics, as well as policies, programmes and other actions taken by States in promoting the full and effective participation of persons with disabilities in society and development. Such reports could serve as a benchmark for monitoring progress in the equalization of opportunities for persons with disabilities in the future, as part of the overall monitoring and evaluation of the post-2015 development framework.

V. Conclusion and recommendations

68. The 2013 high-level meeting on disability and development will provide the opportunity to bring global attention to the situation of persons with disabilities and to establish a strategic vision and its corresponding plan of action for disability-inclusive development. In that context, the meeting should reaffirm the role of persons with disabilities as both agents and beneficiaries who would also take the lead in development processes, emphasizing the commitment of the Organization to equality and the empowerment of persons with disabilities. The meeting could also position the progressive removal of barriers faced by persons with disabilities as a main pillar of its strategic vision and global plan of action.

69. The recommendations on measures essential to the inclusion of persons with disabilities in development processes are set out below. All recommendations in the present report should be implemented with the full and effective participation of persons with disabilities, which is a prerequisite for inclusive, sustainable and equitable development. Increased attention must also be given to the situation of those experiencing exclusion as a result of specific types of disability, such as mental, intellectual or psychosocial disability, as well as other multiple forms of disability. In the same vein, multiple-discrimination disability — owing to disability compounded by gender, ethnicity, race or other grounds — should be accorded additional attention.

70. **In the light of the above, the General Assembly may wish to consider recommendations for taking action in the following priority areas:**

(a) **Strengthening the international normative framework on disability by ensuring inclusion of disability in the post-2015 development framework and**

its resulting policies and programmes, and monitoring and evaluation frameworks. The harmonization of national legislative, policy and institutional structures in line with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and other international human rights and development instruments, should also be prioritized and accelerated;

(b) Advancing accessibility and the progressive removal of barriers to the physical environment, transportation and information and communications, including information and communications technology, as a prerequisite for the equalization of opportunities for persons with disabilities and for achieving sustainable and inclusive development for all. In that context, the universal design approach should be taken into account as a tool for mainstreaming disability in the general system of society;

(c) Taking specific measures to address the information gap on the situation of persons with disabilities in economic and social development by strengthening the collection, compilation and analysis of national disability data and statistics, using existing guidelines on disability measurement. The General Assembly may also wish to consider initiating a periodic United Nations global report on disability and development for benchmarking progress in the equalization of opportunities for persons with disabilities and to support the inclusion of disability indicators in the monitoring and evaluation of future goals and targets of the post-2015 development framework;

(d) Building the capacity of all stakeholders to effectively implement international commitments to disability-inclusive development in alignment with the goals and objectives of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. This would require strengthening of the knowledge and skills of all stakeholders at both policy and operational levels to take concrete action in promoting the rights of persons with disabilities and in mainstreaming disability in development processes in a coordinated and cohesive manner.